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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s) : Christoph Seidel, et al.
 Serial No : 09/896,032
 Filed : June 29, 2001
 For : METHOD FOR DETERMINING EARLY HCV SEROCONVERSION
 Art Unit : 1648
 Examiner : D. C. Wortman

February 28, 2003

Hon. Commissioner of Patents
and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

AMENDMENT
UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.111)

This amendment is submitted in response to the office action dated December 12, 2002.

Please amend this application as follows:

3>
IN THE CLAIMS

Cancel claims 27-36 and replace them by claims 39-48, which follow. Replace claim 38 by the following, and add claim 49:

Claim 38: A method for determining seroconversion in a human subject infected with hepatitis C virus, comprising: (i) incubating a sample taken from said subject, with a first solid phase bound polypeptide, and a second, labeled polypeptide which is in solution, wherein the amino acid sequence of said first and second polypeptides are found in hepatitis C virus protein NS3 region, said incubation being carried out under reducing conditions, to determine binding of a hepatitis C virus specific antibody to both of said first and second polypeptides, and (ii) comparing results from (i) to results obtained at a previous point in time from said subject which were negative for presence of antibodies to hepatitis C virus protein NS3 region, wherein a difference in (i) as compared to results obtained from said

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cont'd.*